

# Safety Belt Usage in Illinois

## November 2001 Observational Survey Results

### Survey Design

The recent seat belt survey was a statistical (multi-stage random) observational survey conducted statewide during November 2001 on both high volume state highways and low volume local roads and residential streets. The survey design was based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's requirements and had four characteristics.

1. The survey was conducted between 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. when the light was adequate for observation.
2. The survey observations were restricted to front seat occupants (drivers and passengers) of cars, sport utility vehicles, taxis, vans and pickup trucks.
3. Only the use of a shoulder harness was observed since vehicles passed an observation point without stopping.
4. The survey sites included all interstate highways and freeways and a random sample of residential streets within selected areas.

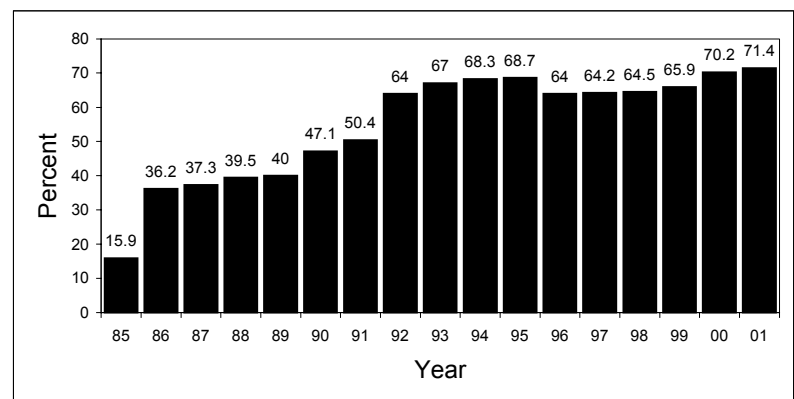
There were 102,161 front seat occupants observed at 258 locations statewide in this survey. The survey provided a statistically representative sample of the state as a whole. For more information on survey design, refer to the original report entitled "Design of the New Safety Belt Usage Survey in Illinois", Division of Traffic Safety, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), January 1994.

### Historical Trends

Illinois' first safety belt survey was conducted in April 1985, prior to the safety belt law becoming effective on July 1, 1985. The data from the first survey became a base from which to measure the success of Illinois' efforts to educate citizens about the benefits of using safety belts.

The base line (April 1985) occupant restraint usage rate for all front seat occupants (drivers and passengers) observed in Illinois was 15.9 percent. During the first twelve months after the safety belt law became effective, the observed usage rate increased to 36.2 percent. Since that time, the usage rate has shown a gradual increase, peaking at 71.4 percent in November of 2001. There was an increase of over 55 percentage points since the first survey was conducted in April 1985 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Front Seat Occupant Restraint Usage Rate**  
Comparison of Survey Results



**Note: 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 surveys include pickup trucks, which tend to have lower usage rates.**

### Summary of Findings

Table 1 provides a summary of results of the 258 sites for the November 2001 safety belt survey. The first column of the table depicts the total number of front seat occupants observed and the second column shows the usage rate. The categories listed down the left side of the table indicate the various regions of the state where the survey was conducted (with the number of sites of each region in parentheses), road types, time of day the survey was conducted, and a breakdown of weekdays and weekends. There were a total of 102,161 occupants observed during the November 2001 survey. An observed 71.4 percent of the

102,161 occupants were wearing their seat belts. The collar counties of DuPage, Will, Kane, McHenry, and Lake had the highest usage rate at 76.0 percent followed by Cook County at 70.2 percent. On the other hand, the downstate counties (Champaign, Macon, Rock Island, St. Clair, Montgomery and Peoria) and the City of Chicago had lower usage rates at 67.4 percent and 65.0 percent respectively.

was observed, non-rush hour traffic occupants had the highest usage rate based on time of day at 73.3 percent followed by the morning rush hours (7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.) at 70.2 percent. The noon rush hours (11:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.) had the lowest usage rate at 67.5 percent. Weekend traffic occupants had a higher percentage of belt use than weekday traffic occupants (73.7 percent verses 69.1 percent).

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Safety Belt Usage Rates in Illinois</b> <b>(November 2001)</b>		
	Total Observed	Actual Usage Rate
<b>Statewide (258)</b>	<b>102,161</b>	<b>71.4</b>
<b>Region</b>		
City of Chicago (46)	22,138	65.0
Cook County (40)	12,712	70.2
Collar Counties (118)	48,910	76.0
Downstate (54)	18,401	67.5
<b>Road Type</b>		
Residential (190)	63,422	67.7
U.S./Illinois Highways (40)	17,528	71.9
Interstate Highways (28)	21,211	81.7
<b>Time of Day</b>		
Morning Rush Hours (55)	27,188	70.2
Noon Rush Hours (45)	19,375	67.5
Non-Rush Hours (158)	55,598	73.3
<b>Day of Week</b>		
Weekends (115)	50,251	73.7
Weekdays (143)	51,910	69.1

For more information, please contact:

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Based on road type, interstate highways had the highest usage rate at 81.7 percent. U.S. and Illinois marked highways fell around the overall state average at 71.9 percent, while residential roads had the lowest usage at 67.7 percent. As